

IMBA Ride Center Report

LOS ALAMOS RIDE CENTER

LOS ALAMOS , NEW MEXICO

NOVEMBER 2017

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1. Introduction

What is an IMBA Ride Center?

The Ride Center™ designation represents IMBA's Model Trail recognition for large-scale mountain bike facilities that offer something for every rider. Bring your full arsenal of bikes to these destination-worthy areas. From backcountry adventures to shuttle-served gravity trails, and from expert-only to family-friendly, you'll encounter the best the sport has to offer. Ride Centers range from renowned Gold Level destinations like Park City and Oakridge to smaller towns that totally revolve around the ride like McCall or Marquette.

IMBA Ride Centers will be designed for every type of mountain biker, provide a positive mountain bike experience with progressive skill building, and include facilities that break down the barriers for entry with bike rentals, quality maps, clear signage, and available instruction or guiding. These model trail systems will broaden the demographic of the mountain bike community by providing a model beginner experience that is family friendly on the same site that will challenge an expert rider. A Ride Center will demonstrate the best practices in mountain bike trail design and construction for grassroots replication.

Ride Centers will also bring major economic benefits to their host communities. IMBA has compiled online resources that describe the ways that mountain biking supports tourism and enhances economic development in communities around the globe.

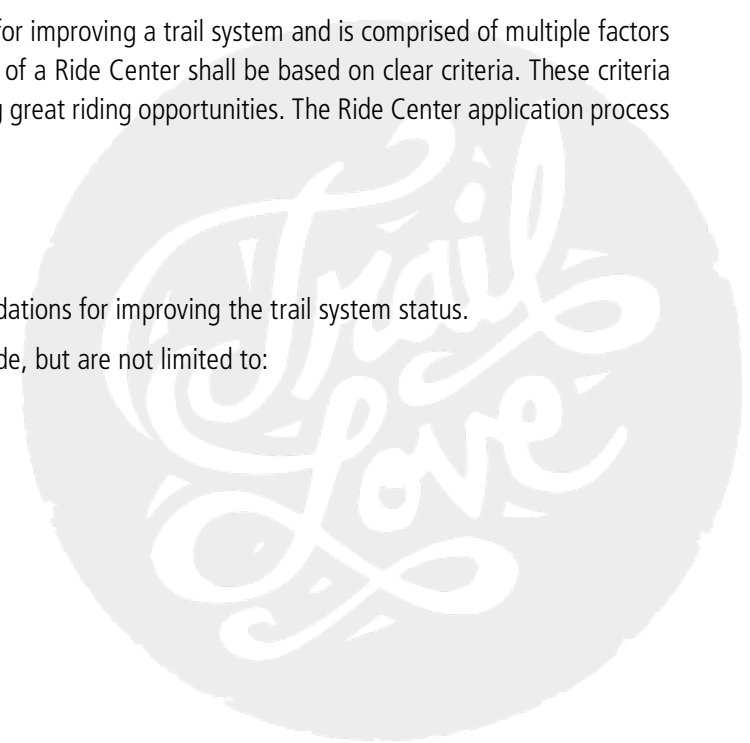
What is the procedure to become an IMBA Ride Center?

This designation is just as much about the process as the award itself. The application criteria is the blueprint for improving a trail system and is comprised of multiple factors with both trail experience and surrounding community amenities being measured. The designation and rating of a Ride Center shall be based on clear criteria. These criteria do not need to be objective and some will necessarily be subjective. But in all cases, they will relate to providing great riding opportunities. The Ride Center application process consists of:

- A self-evaluation
- An in person professional assessment and review
- A thorough evaluation and report of the existing conditions, opportunities for growth and recommendations for improving the trail system status.

The Evaluation criteria is comprised of key aspects that make an amazing mountain bike destination and include, but are not limited to:

- Services
- Destination Best Practices
- Trail Types
- Trail Mileage
- Quality Trail Experience



2. You Are Here

Overview

Los Alamos is an intriguing destination for mountain biking because of its proximity to other regional attractions, fascinating history, and a unique community culture. With other recreation destinations such as Taos and Santa Fe relatively close by it makes perfect sense that mountain bikers would begin adding Los Alamos to their list. The town's place in history as the birthplace of the atomic bomb creates an air of mystery that is reinforced by the presence of modern day research labs with mirrored glass windows behind miles of fences. But surprisingly these fences aren't as impenetrable as one might think. In many places the singletrack that follows perimeters, ends up diving through gaps and dashing across roadways to reveal a much more open environment for exploring the rugged terrain that surrounds the community and labs. In fact it is the long steep-sided and flat topped mesas that really creates the most challenging obstacles to the singletrack that seems to ooze from the back side of nearly every parking lot, cul-de-sac, dirt road, and of course trailhead.

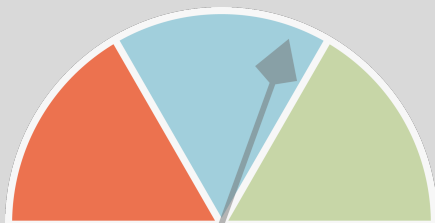
When one seeks to define the theme of riding the trails surrounding Los Alamos words like "loose" and "rugged" come to mind. And it is really these two characteristics that dominate the riding experience. There are certainly sections of relatively smooth trail, especially when riding segments that are closer to town. But even these almost always have short sections of challenge features such as ledges, rocks, and exposure. In the mountains to the west, riders seeking a truly rugged experience can find it in spades while descending trails right into the city center. All in all this creates a trail system that caters to riders who are already accomplished or are looking to challenge themselves on terrain that is probably a level or two above what they have back at home.



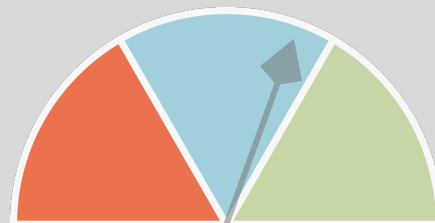
Summary of Graphic Overview

The graphs below represent the four scoring categories that are used in rating a prospective Ride Center's status. The arrow indicates the score that was calculated by the review team after visiting the destination and sampling the submissions for each criteria category. When the submission was found lacking or inappropriate, reviewers made an effort to locate trails, venues, etc. that would match better. This effort ensures that candidates have the best chance at receiving the score they deserve.

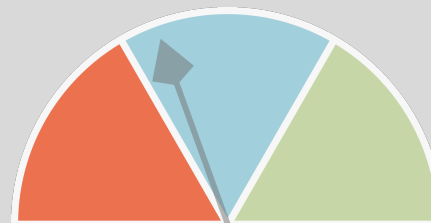
SERVICES



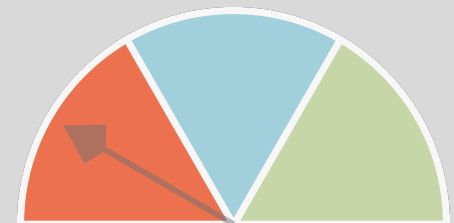
DESTINATION BEST PRACTICES



TRAIL TYPES



QUALITY TRAIL EXPERIENCE



3a. Analysis > Services

Highlights

- The customer service at Fusion Multisport is top notch. Their willingness to provide information, mechanical skills, and having the right equipment on hand makes it possible to keep visitors on the trail.
- Clean and comfortable accommodations are readily available. Staff seem ready and able to help riders out with secure bike storage. Hotel type lodging is backed up with a few quality BnB options as well.
- Restaurants such as the Blue Window Bistro, Pajarito Brewpub, and Bathtub Brewing are perfect locations to end a ride and refuel for the next day's adventures.
- Los Alamos has a number of interesting cultural attractions that will be of interest to visiting riders. The Bradbury Science Museum was a favorite of our review team.
- The local bus service will allow riders to bring a bike at no additional cost. This service will be very useful for any visiting mountain bikers who don't feel like their legs will be able to pedal them back into town

Challenges

Challenge #1 – No Lodging That Caters Specifically To Bicyclists

- The existing accommodations are motivated to help but there is no truly bike friendly lodging.
- Encourage lodging owners to provide indoor bike storage, a bike wash and service area, and laundry facilities.
- Bikers will feel taken care of, excited to return, and will share their experience with others. **This will also earn an additional point.**

Challenge #2 – Nowhere To Rent Bikes

- No all visitors bring a bike with them, and most won't want to drive all the way the Santa Fe to rent one.
- Encourage a local business to make an investment in a fleet of high quality rental bikes.

- It will be easier for visitors to try out your trails, and they might return with friends if they have fun. **This will also earn an additional point..**

Challenge #3 – No Camping With Showers

- Mountain bikers get dirty and sweaty, they need a place to wash off the grit if they're going to stay and ride the trails for a few days.
- Encourage campground operators to upgrade their facilities with hot showers.
- Operators will gain an opportunity to bring in more income and visitors will want to stay more nights. **This will also earn an additional point.**



Services	Points Available	Points Earned
Bike Shop - Goods and Services	2	1
MTB Guide Services / Outfitter	1	0
Bike Rental	2	0
Shopping	1	1
Primitive Camping	1	1
Camping with Potable Water and Showers	1	0
Camping with Van/RV hookup	1	1
Hotel / Motel	1	1
Bike-friendly Lodging	1	0
Quality / Variety of Restaurants	2	1
Brew Pub	1	1

Coffee Shop	1	1
Grocery Store	1	1
Natural / Organic Food	1	1
Airport	2	2
Medical Services / EMS	1	1
TOTAL POINTS	20	13

3b. Analysis > Destination Best Practices

Highlights

- There is a tremendous variety of recreation opportunities in the area. This variety encourages visitors to stay longer and reinforces why locals love the place they live.
- The community is inundated with trails, giving it a “singletrack city” feel. There seems to be a trail connecting every corner of the community. Riding right from town reduces the need to drive a vehicle to distant trailheads. It also helps reinforce strong values of conservation by providing immediate access to wild areas.
- The Los Alamos trails app for smartphones makes it relatively easy to learn about area trails. Other apps such as Trailforks and MTB Project can be used as well.
- The organization of local mountain bikers, the Tuff Riders, is motivated to continue stewardship of the local trails and improving mountain biking experiences.

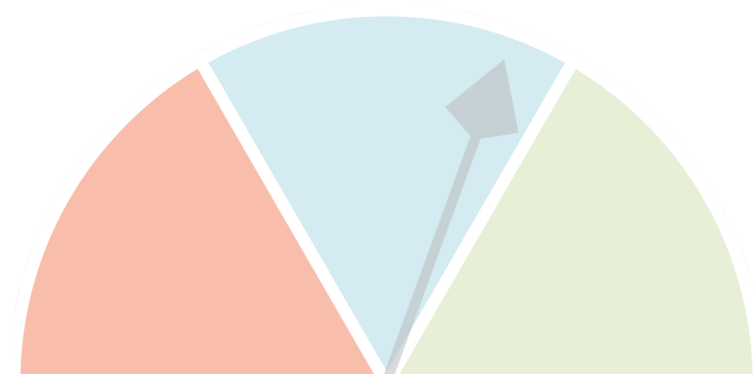
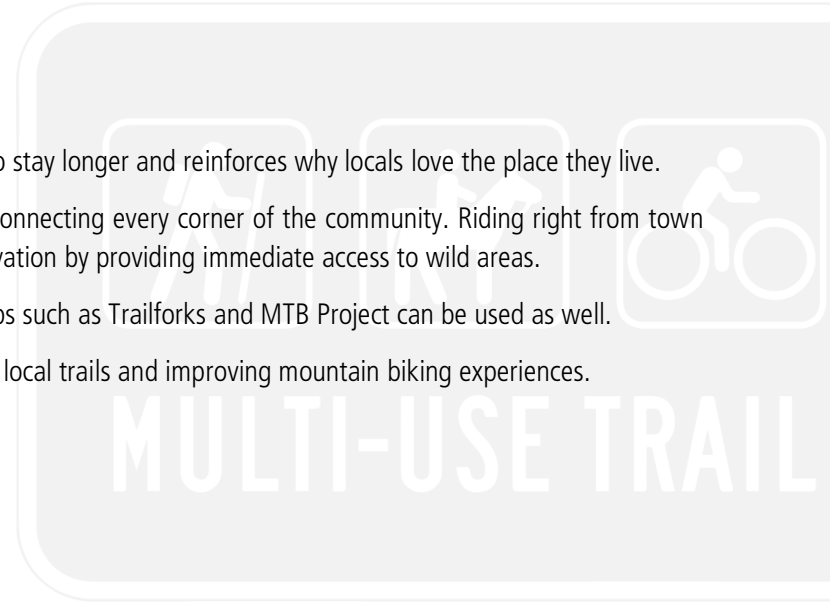
Challenges

Challenge #1 – Inadequate Signage On Trails

- Signs are a rare sight on trails in the area. If they do exist they are often hidden or confusing.
- Develop a signage plan as part of a community trails plan. Create an MOU between all land managers which ensures that all involved are focused on improving navigation for trail users.
- Trail users will be safer, happier, and will come back again. **This will also assist with earning additional points in the Quality Trail Experience area.**

Challenge #2 – Trailheads Are Ill-Equipped

- Trailheads rarely offer anything more than parking
- Install kiosks, install fade & weather resistant trail system maps at kiosks, consider adding restrooms to busy trailheads.
- Users will be able to explore your trail network with confidence, knowing where they’ve come from and where they’re going. Reduces conflicts between users and neighbors



Destination Best Practices	Points Available	Points Earned
Signs / Wayfinding	2	0
Trailhead Amenities	2	0
Trailhead Access by Bike	1	1
Shuttle / Uplift Options	2	1
Three or More Days of Riding	2	2
Long-distance Adventure	2	1
Backcountry Experience	2	1
MTB Club	2	2
Group Rides	1	1
MTB-related Events	2	2
Community Support	2	2

Land Manager / Owner Support	2	1
Data Capture and Evaluation	1	0
Recreation Variety	2	2
Marketing Presence	2	1
Ride Center / Trails Marketing and Promotions Group	1	0
Tourism Riding Season \geq 8 Months	1	1
Tourism Riding Season \geq 10 Months	1	0
TOTAL POINTS	30	18

3c. Analysis > Quality Trail Experience

Highlights

- Los Alamos provides some of the most physically demanding riding around. This is a result of both the altitude and the geology of the area. Anyone riding here will be tired and ready to hoist a refreshing beverage or two by the end of the day.
- The trails tell dramatic stories of the earth's past as they move through changing geology. Most of the routes at higher altitudes are rough and loose growing smoother as they descend towards town. This creates a feeling of heading towards safety, which feels very satisfying and add sense of welcome when riders arrive in town.
- Trails such as Pueblo Canyon and Quemazon provide very challenging and adventurous ride experiences that are surprisingly accessible.
- Pajarito Canyon to Nail Trail is a signature enduro ride that should be on the list for any advanced level riders in the region.

Challenges

Challenge #1 – Guaje Ridge Needs Regular Vegetative Maintenance

- Edges of this trail are overgrown with thorns that shred rider's legs and make it difficult to enjoy an otherwise awesome ride.
- This type of thorny vegetation needs to be cut well back at least once, but probably twice per year.
- Riders will be excited have yet another signature enduro type ride. **This will also earn an additional point.**

Challenge #2 – Pajarito Bike Park Trails Are All Very Difficult And Of Similar Style

- Most of the trails are very rough, loose, and challenging. This is great but doesn't provide for much rider development.
- Develop 1-2 gravity trails that are beginner to intermediate and focus more on curves and jumps, less on rough loose and rocky.

- This will bring more riders to the park and will create an opportunity for families to recreate together. **This will also earn an additional point.**

Challenge #3 – Beginner Trails Around Town Push Riders Comfort Level

- Many of the trails near town have long sections that are relatively easy. The issue is that these sections are interrupted by technical sections that are just too hard to be considered beginner.
- Create easier alternate lines around technical sections on Woodland and East Perimeter.
- Los Alamos will be able to truly claim a beginner route. **This will also earn an additional point.**



3d. Analysis / Trails

Highlights

- Trails such as Guaje, Quemazon, Cabra, etc. can be combined to create really challenging long rides that leave right from town.
- Los Alamos trails truly run the gamut of types, with very challenging descents and climbs that usually require a high level of technical riding skills. This is a great place for advanced riders to push their limits without having to get too far from town.
- Trails near town have developed in an organic way and work reasonably well at providing riders with convenient access to trail options. The large number of shorter trail segments can be intermixed to provide locals with “nearly endless” options.

Challenges

Challenge #1 – Very Few Truly Beginner To Intermediate Rides

- There are not many options for less skilled riders to put together loops that fit their ability level.
- Develop new trails near East Perimeter to optimize loop opportunities.
- **This will earn additional points.**

Challenge #2 – Climb From Pajarito Ski Area Up To Guaje Ridge is Doubletrack

- Although it's efficient, the route is not singletrack and runs on some very unnecessarily steep grades.
- Work in partnership with the USFS to replace the steepest sections of the route with sustainable singletrack.
- **This will add a good climb and earn additional points.**

Challenge #3 – Very Little Bike Specific Singletrack

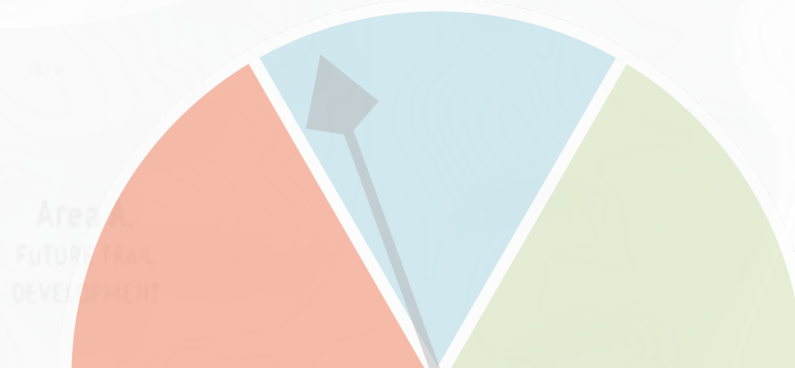
- Except for Xander's trail, all other trails are relatively traditional singletrack that doesn't allow riders to readily build skills such as cornering.

- Develop and build an intermediate or advanced descending “Flow” trail that uses berms, rollers, jumps and other features.
- Riders build skill on a more predictable trail surface. **This will earn additional points.**

Challenge #4 – Pipeline Trail Is Doubletrack

- This important route connects riders from town to the top of Quemazon or Guaje Ridge, but doubletrack doesn't provide the technical challenge that a good singletrack climb would.
- Work in partnership with land managers to replace the steepest sections of the route with sustainable challenging singletrack.
- **This will also earn an additional point.**

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3d. Analysis / Trails

Trail Category & Name	Points Available	Points Earned	Quality Trail Experience Score	Strengths	Weaknesses
Traditional Single-track: Easy Woodland, East Perimeter	1	1	0	Easiest trails available, relatively smooth.	Marker signs are hidden, reduce average trail grades where possible
Traditional Single-track: More Difficult Woodland, Bridges, Upper Pueblo, West Perimeter, Xander, East Perimeter, Woodland	1	1	1	Classic desert trails, great access from town, easier to maintain because of proximity	Signs are challenging to follow, usually hidden or unclear
Traditional Single-track: Very Difficult Aquatic Center to Bridges Connector, Upper Pueblo, Technical Perimeter, Pueblo Rim, Camp Hamilton, Tent Rocks, East Fork, Bridges	1	1	1	Pueblo Rim is one of the most unique and beautiful trails in the area. Very challenging riding and still close to town	Signs are challenging to follow, usually hidden or unclear
Traditional Single-track: Extremely Diff Pajarito Canyon, Nail, Quemazon, Guaje, Cabra	1	1	1	Pajarito is a fantastic rough descent. Cabra traverses some beautiful terrain. Quemazon is a strong descent.	Guaje Ridge is nearly un-rideable because of thorns growing into the trail. Signs are challenging to follow, usually hidden or unclear. Quemazon has some bad erosion at top.
Bike Specific Single-track: Easy, 1.0 miles Xander's	1	1	1	Trail has a nice steady climb with minimum TTFs. Downhill is fun and has hand built berms.	Last segment at bottom is on doubletrack
Bike Specific Single-track: Easy, 2.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Bike Specific Single-track: Easy, 3.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Bike Specific Single-track: More Difficult, 1.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A

Bike Specific Single-track: More Difficult, 2.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Bike Specific Single-track: More Difficult, 3.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Bike Specific Single-track: Very Difficult, 1.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Bike Specific Single-track: Very Difficult, 2.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Bike Specific Single-track: Very Difficult, 3.0 miles Half Aspen Loop	1	1	0	Very rough off the top and then becoming a bit more smooth and flowy down low. Large ledges and drops were fun but sneak up on the rider.	Blown down timbers and poor signage
Bike Specific Single-track: Extremely Difficult, 1.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Bike Specific Single-track: Extremely Difficult, 2.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Bike Specific Gravity Trail: Easy, 1.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Bike Specific Gravity Trail: Easy, 2.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Bike Specific Gravity Trail: More Difficult, 1.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	There are no blue gravity trails listed at Pajarito that are long enough to qualify
Bike Specific Gravity Trail: More Difficult, 2.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Bike Specific Gravity Trail: More Difficult, 4.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	There are no blue gravity trails listed at Pajarito that are long enough to qualify
Bike Specific Gravity Trail: Very Difficult, 1.0 miles Braking Bad, Fast & Loose, Mother's Milk, Red Dog, Air Raid, Battlestations	1	1	0	The bike park has a lot of challenging descents to provide good variety.	Down timber made it impossible to enjoy the trails. Poor signage hampered navigation.

Bike Specific Gravity Trail: Very Difficult, 2.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Bike Specific Gravity Trail: Very Difficult, 4.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Bike Specific Gravity Trail: Extremely Difficult, 1.0 miles Natural Selection, Chupacabra	1	1	0	Chupacabra is a highly challenging jump line with expert features. Natural Selection provides a more natural, steep, tech trail and is extremely challenging	Down timber made it impossible to enjoy the trails. Poor signage hampered navigation.
Bike Specific Gravity Trail: Extremely Difficult, 2.0 miles	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Descents \geq 1 mile/1.6 km Water Canyon	1	1	1	Gorgeous scenery along the creek, especially as you drop into narrow forested canyon	None
Descents \geq 3 mile/4.8 km Bayo Canyon	1	1	1	Old wagon ruts add historical interest and technical challenge	Doesn't really go anywhere
Descents \geq 5 mile/8 km Guaje Ridge	1	1	0	Amazing views up top and fun challenging singletrack seems to never end	So overgrown with thorns it's nearly un-rideable. Not very rewarding to climb on doubletrack to access Guaje Ridge trail.
Technical Descent Quemazon, Pajarito Canyon	2	2	1	Quemazon is an extremely enjoyable and challenging trail with convenient access from town.. Pajarito provides a rough and loose backcountry descent.	Quemazon trailhead has no legible signs in kiosk or amenities such as restrooms.
Long climb \geq 1 mile/1.6 km Rendija Trail	1	1	1	Narrow and interesting with short challenging ramps	Too many intersections with confusing signs
Long climb \geq 3 mile/4.8 km Valle Canyon	1	1	0	Relatively moderate climb with consistent grades	Out and back route is not as satisfying as a loop
Long climb \geq 5 mile/8 km Pipeline Road	1	0	0	N/A	Disqualified because it isn't single track trail, it is double track
Technical Climbs	1	0	0	N/A	N/A

Progressive Dirt Jump Trail Area	2	0	0	N/A	N/A
Progressive Skills Development Area	2	0	0	N/A	N/A
Pump Tracks	2	0	0	N/A	N/A
Gravity Bike Park with Uplift	5	3	0	Very reasonable lift pass prices and lots of challenging trails for descending	No real easy options, poor signage.
All-weather trails \geq 5 mile/8 km	2	1	1	Desert trails with well-draining soils	Minimal effort to design trails that will cope with major storms
All-weather trails \geq 10 mile/16 km	2	1	1	Desert trails with well-draining soils	Minimal effort to design trails that will cope with major storms
Trails groomed for snow-biking \geq 10 mile/16 km	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
TOTAL POINTS	50	20	9		

4. Conclusion

Rating

After reviewing all of the categories, efforts and challenges; our scoring supports the opinion that your destination is nearly qualified to be a Bronze level IMBA Ride Center. Unfortunately, the applicant failed to meet the minimum qualifications in both "Qualitative" and "Objective" areas. However, there are several opportunities for the applicant to make changes, improvements, or corrections to trail offerings that did not satisfy the criteria. These can be found by looking at the "Challenges" section of each category in this report. After the applicant makes improvements they can arrange to provide evidence that satisfies our critique and allows us to approve your application for the earned award. Our planned date for public announcement of 2018 Ride Center Awards is June 30th, 2018. To qualify for our 2018 announcement, all evidence must be submitted by June 10th 2018. If the candidate cannot make improvements and submit evidence before that date, they can continue improvements and work towards qualifying for our 2019 Ride Center Awards.

Los Alamos Ride Center Review Score						
Minimum Scores			Category	Available	Your Scores	Award Level
Bronze	Silver	Gold				
60	75	90	Services	20	13	No Award At This Time. Applicant will be given ample time to correct issues and achieve the minimum qualification scores.
			Destination Best Practices	30	18	
			Trail Types	50	20	
				100	51	
10	20	30	Quality Trail Experience	40	9	

Terms

Consider this report as provisional. If you would like to make improvements and provide evidence of improvements to your score and Ride Center level, please contact Shane Wilson for full details and assistance with the process, shane.wilson@imba.com.